



Feline Forum

Courtesy of:

Should I Vaccinate My Cat Against FIP?

Primucell-FIP, an intranasal vaccine produced by SmithKline Beecham Animal Health, has been available since 1991. Since that time the Cornell Feline Health Center at Cornell University has conducted three studies on the vaccine to determine its safety and efficacy.

Post-vaccination complaints have been minimal as reported to the drug company and to the Cornell Feline Health Center. Furthermore, serious post-vaccination signs of illness were not observed during the studies.

The efficacy studies showed that only partial protection was observed in a portion of the vaccinated cats exposed to a low dose of virus. Also a phenomenon known as antibody-dependent enhancement (ADE) may develop. ADE occurs when antibody helps the virus infect the macrophages (white blood cells that engulf and

destroy infectious agents). Then the macrophage becomes a carrier for the virus rather than destroying the virus.

The current recommendation is not to routinely use the vaccine in

low-risk populations of cats. In high-risk populations (i.e. breeding colonies and multicat facilities), the veterinarian must assess the risk of FIP without vaccination compared to the risk and benefits with vaccination.

Keeping Older Cats Healthy

Cats become more susceptible to diseases associated with aging by the time they reach 8 to 9 years of age. Fortunately, advances in feline medicine have helped to extend the cat's normal life span. It is not unusual to hear of cats living into their twenties. Providing good health care for your cat through all its stages of life is the best means of assuring an optimum life span.

Aging is a natural process, producing changes in body metabolism, hormone balance, and sensory perception. Signs reflecting some of these changes include cloudiness of eyes; thinning hair coat; decreased tolerance of the cold; flabby skin; prominent spine and hips; joint stiffness or lameness; graying of the muzzle; muscle atrophy; deafness; and decreased tolerance of environmental changes.

Older cats should have yearly physical examinations by a veterinarian. Early detection and treatment of diseases are particularly important for older animals, since their resistance is often reduced.

Choosing Kitty Litter

Selecting litter for your cat can be as confusing as selecting cat food. The marketplace offers many choices—clay types, pelleted alfalfa, and clumping granules. You can narrow the choices by deciding what characteristics are most important to you.

Criteria commonly used include low levels of dust, good absorbency, good odor control, and particle size. Remember, though that the ultimate test is your cat's acceptance of the litter.

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